

The Han produced great historians. Sima Qian (c. 145–86 BCE) wrote the first comprehensive history of China entitled *Shiji* (Historical Records). Divided into five sections—basic annals, chronological tables, monographs, hereditary families, and biographies—and 130 chapters, this massive work provided both historical information and moral instruction. Following the example of Sima Qian, Ban Gu (32–92) wrote the first dynastic history of China, *Hanshu* (History of the Han Dynasty). Ban Gu's sister Ban Zhao, the most famous female literary figure of the Han, assisted in the writing of the *Hanshu*. Possessing great historical and literary values, both the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* set the standard for later dynastic histories that continued to the early twentieth century.

Legacy of the Han

The Han dynasty set the pattern of civilization for subsequent Chinese history. It provided future generations with a model of a long-lasting, extensive, and unified empire. It consolidated an effective form of bureaucracy and established a distinguished tradition of political philosophy. It laid a solid foundation of belief system, social structure, and economic form for later dynasties. It also developed a basic mode of thinking and a scheme for dealing with foreign peoples. So strongly did the Han dynasty influence Chinese culture that 95 percent of present-day Chinese call themselves Han, their language the Han language, and their written script Han characters. The Han achievements made China a dominant force in the preindustrial world.

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HAN RIVER The Han River flows about 514 kilometers through Seoul, capital of the Republic of Korea (South Korea), rising from a spring in Odae Mountain in Kangwon Province and emptying into the Yellow Sea. Several prehistoric human settlements

have been excavated along the river. At present the Han supplies drinking water for 20 million people living within its basin—Kangwon and Kyunggi provinces, including the cities of Seoul and Inchon.

The South Han River, a distinct tributary of the Han River, flows through Kangwon province and North Ch'ungch'ong Province before it joins the North Han at Paldang Reservoir, an artificial dam providing the major source of drinking water for Seoul metropolitan area residents. The river also provides water for agricultural and industrial purposes and generates electrical power through three major dams. The Han is a symbol of South Korea's remarkable economic development in the 1970s and 1980s, which is known as the "Han River miracle." The 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic stadium is located along its banks. Other recreational facilities include the Yeouido Han Riverside Park, a 36.9-kilometer bicycle trail, swimming pools, and fishing areas. The Han is also popular for water skiing and yachting.

The water quality of the Han River is deteriorating due to increasing nonpoint sources of pollutants from agriculture and rapid urbanization of traditionally rural areas surrounding Seoul. The lack of a buffer zone between the river and increasing human settlement is another cause of environmental concern.

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HAN YONG-UN (1879–1944), Korean monk, poet, nationalist. Born to a farming family in Chungchong Province, Han Yong-un was originally educated in Chinese classical literature in his village, where he became involved in the Tonghak sect. The Tonghak insurgency led to regional strife and subsequent Japanese intervention. Han went into hiding in the Paektam monastery near Seoraksan in eastern Korea, where he adopted the name Manhae (Ten Thousand Seas).

As a monk, Han traveled to Japan to study Zen Buddhism. When Japan annexed Korea, however, he left for Russia to form a base of resistance against the Japanese. Han returned to Korea and was one of the original signers of the Declaration of Korean Independence, for which act he was imprisoned by the Japanese until 1923. In prison he wrote "A Letter of Korean Independence," which is regarded as one of the founding documents of the 1919 independence movement.

Han's writings are considered among the best of Korean and Zen poetry, and his works have been published internationally. A memorial to him was erected at the site of the 1 March uprising in Tapkol Park (formerly Pagoda Park) in Seoul.

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HANGAI MOUNTAINS The Hangai (Khangai, Hangayn) Mountains dominate central Mongolia with their rich pastures and forests. The range extends 800 kilometers northwest-southeast and parallels the Mongolian Altai Mountains. Several of the range's snowy peaks reach an altitude of 3,500 meters above sea level, and the highest of these peaks, snow-capped Otgon Tenger (3,905 meters above sea level), remains a central and sacred place in Mongolian folklore. Medicinal herbs and minerals gathered from its slopes are a popular commodity in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital.

The Hangai Mountains drain into the Arctic basin via the Orhon, Ider, and Selenge rivers, the last being the main tributary of Lake Baikal in Siberia. On the range's southern slopes, the dry beds of occasional watercourses feed into the Valley of Lakes, an arid plateau interspersed with freshwater and saline lakes. The Hangai Range's northern slopes are covered with forest and mountain meadows, while the southern slopes are generally treeless and arid. Frequent earthquakes in the region (the most recent in 1905) have left dramatic fissures referred to as the "trails of a giant snake." In this environment, musk deer, willow grouse, lynx, snow leopard, brown bear, wild boar, golden eagle, and the central Asian viper make their home.

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HANGUL SCRIPT Hangul is a script used in writing Korean, a language of 72 million speakers. It is, like the Roman alphabet, an alphabetical writing, consisting of 24 basic alphabet letters, 14 for consonants and 10 for vowels. Unlike the Roman alphabet in which independent alphabet letters are arranged linearly, for the hangul script, consonant and vowel letters are combined to create syllable blocks.

Whereas the origins of most writing systems are unknown, hangul, originally called *hunminjeongeum* (meaning "the correct sounds for the instruction of the

people"), was invented in 1443 by King Sejong the Great (1397–1450), the fourth monarch (reigned 1419–1450) of the Yi (Choson) dynasty (1392–1910), with his royal scholars.

Although it was promulgated in 1446, it was not until 1894 that the hangul script began to be used in official government documents. The first all-Korean script newspaper, *Tongnip Sinmun* (Independent News), was published in 1896 by Seo Jaepil (1863–1951). The name hangul ("Korean script") was given by Ju Sigyeong (1876–1914), one of the earliest modern Korean grammarians.

The design of the Hangul letters resulted from a deep understanding of phonetic principles and Chinese cosmological philosophy on the part of the king and his scholars. Originally, 28 basic letters (17 consonant letters and 11 vowel letters) were introduced, of which 3 consonant letters and one vowel letter have disappeared in the current writing system.

The consonant letters for *k* (or *g*), *n*, *s* (or *sh*), *m*, and *ng* are designed after the shape of the speech organs when they are pronounced. The other consonant letters are made by adding a stroke or two to these or by extending the initial forms. An extra stroke indicates a different articulatory feature, such as aspiration (extra puff of the air in producing a sound). In this respect, the Hangul Script is unique and more refined in representing sounds than any other script.

Vowel letters are designed based on the yin-yang philosophy of universal complementary forces and the East Asian cosmological belief that heaven, earth, and humanity are the three most fundamental features in the universe. The three initial vowel letters are designed after the round shape of heaven, the flat shape of earth, and the vertical shape of a man standing. The other letters are made by combining the three initial letters, with the combinations being guided by the principles of the yin-yang theory as to how heaven interacts either with the human being or with the earth.

Because of its systematic and scientific organization as well as its sophisticated phonetic representation, the hangul script is regarded as one of Korea's cultural treasures. Its linguistic and cultural value is also recognized by scholars outside Korea as a great intellectual achievement.

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